



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



M.J. "Mike" Foster  
Governor

L. Hall Bohlinger  
Secretary

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**Contact:** Analisa Mir  
**Telephone:** 225.765.0731

### **ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS**

#### **DEQ SETTLES ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS WITH DOW FOR \$2.4 MILLION**

(Baton Rouge) -- The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) today announced a proposed settlement with The Dow Chemical Company Louisiana Operations in Plaquemine totaling \$2.4 million. The proposed agreement will require Dow to pay a civil cash penalty of \$1 million to the state and to perform a number of environmental projects totaling \$1.4 million. The settlement agreement addresses alleged air, water and hazardous waste violations.

From the \$1.4 million Dow is required to spend on environmental projects, \$1 million will go to the America's Wetlands Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana to implement two specific projects. First, the Audubon Institute will receive \$200,000 for the development of an IMAX film featuring the importance of Louisiana's coastal wetlands to the state's overall ecosystem. In addition, the America's Wetlands Discovery Center in Lake Charles will receive \$800,000 to create an environmental education center. The America's Wetlands Discovery Center focuses on raising awareness on the coastal erosion crisis facing Louisiana.

"Saving Louisiana's fragile coastline is a crucial endeavor and a monumental task for all state environmental agencies. There is an urgent need for federal, state and local governments, and also for the general public, to act now to preserve our coastal features. Motivation through education is our goal and these projects will push that agenda forward," stated Bruce Hammatt, Assistant Secretary for the DEQ Office of Environmental Compliance.

(more)

The settlement agreement requires three additional environmental education projects to be implemented. The City of Plaquemine will receive \$50,000 to assist with the further development of their Waterfront Park. The Park, which is adjacent to the Plaquemine Locks, will be extended to include an exhibit explaining the importance of Louisiana's freshwater wetlands. DEQ will receive \$300,000 to assist in the development of software necessary to implement electronic submission of Discharge Monitoring Reports, also known as DMRs. DMRs are summaries of monitoring data submitted by facilities that discharge into surface waters as required by their water discharge permits. DEQ will also develop a training and educational program on the electronic DMR submission procedures. To improve air quality in the five-parish Baton Rouge ozone non-attainment area, DEQ is creating a comprehensive public education campaign to heighten citizen awareness regarding ozone formation and its effects on the environment and the public. Dow will be required to provide \$50,000 to assist with the costs of the advertising component of the campaign.

"We are pleased with the outcome of the negotiations. The cash penalty contained in the settlement agreement is substantial, and moreover, the projects being implemented will lead to long-lasting environmental gains for the people of the state of Louisiana," added Hammatt.

The environmental projects that will be implemented as a result of the proposed settlement with Dow are known as Beneficial Environmental Projects or BEPs. BEPs are projects that provide for environmental mitigation, which the respondent is not otherwise legally required to perform, but which the respondent agrees to undertake as a component of a settlement of a violation or penalty assessment. The Beneficial Environmental Projects regulations (LAC33:I Chapter 25) were promulgated in August 2000. Cash penalty payments collected as a result of settlements go into DEQ's Hazardous Waste Clean-Up Fund.